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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes a conference which addressed the 1988 British Education Reform Act (ERA). Two of the major planks in ERA, the National Curriculum and Local Management of Schools (LMS), were discussed in detail by speakers and delegates with a view to developing integration and building inclusive schools. Summaries are provided of the talks given by Tim Brighouse, Mark Vaughan, Hilary Armstrong, Christine Gilbert, Susan Hart, and Richard Rieser. Brighouse stressed that the ERA promotes exclusiveness and should be replaced by a new Education Act built on principles promoting the success of all pupils. Vaughn expressed concern about the Act's weak legal requirements concerning integrating pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and encouraged Local Education Authorities to assure access for all children. Armstrong described integration as a human rights issue and encouraged extending equal opportunities legislation to cover disability. Gilbert spoke about LMS and integration and highlighted opportunities provided by the ERA for more planning and decision making at local levels. Hart identified dangers in differentiating the National Curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Finally, Rieser encouraged educators to listen to the Disability Movement in developing a more inclusive educational system. (DB)

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INTEGRATION – LIVING WITH ERA

Conference Report

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INTEGRATION: LIVING WITH ERA

Report of the CSIE Day Conference on

Friday, November 8, 1991.

More than one hundred education professionals, administrators, teachers and parents, attended the conference at Congress Centre, London arranged by CSIE to discuss how to develop a commitment to integration while living with the 1988 Education Reform Act [ERA].

The impetus for the meeting was CSIE's shared concern with others in the education field that the new legislation had profound implications for the education of children with disabilities or learning difficulties. It was felt that the progress of integration in mainstream schools hung in the balance as a result of the new law, despite the 1981 Education Act which brought in integration duties.

Two of the major planks in ERA, the National Curriculum and Local Management of Schools (LMS), were discussed in detail by the speakers and the delegates with a view to developing integration and building inclusive schools.

Professor Tim Brighouse, University of Keele, was Chairman for the day. Other speakers included Mark Vaughan, from CSIE; Hilary Armstrong MP, Labour frontbench spokeswoman on special education; Christine Gilbert, Deputy Education Officer, London Borough of Harrow; Susan Hart, Cambridge Institute of Education; and Richard Rieser, a disabled teacher. Summaries of their talks are included in this report as well as main points from the discussions.

The conference reporter was Alice Paige-Smith.

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1] Introducing the conference, **Professor TIM BRIGHOUSE**, said one of the major problems with the Education Reform Act was that it was deeply rooted in the market and promoted exclusiveness. A new Education Act was needed built on principles which promoted the success of all pupils as the foundation for an inclusive education system.

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A NEW EDUCATION ACT

Professor Brighouse told the conference that new legislation for an inclusive education system was needed in the long-term, but in the short-term it was important to promote integration even with the current "constraints on resources and unhelpful attitudes". Looking to the future, there should be a national debate about the framework of the education system; already there was an unravelling of the Education Reform Act and a fragmentation of the education system.

"It is only a matter of time before measures are taken to correct some of the obvious difficulties in the Education Reform Act. Somebody will say: 'Hang on, you've had quite a long debate, we need concentration and we need a new Education Act'".

FIVE PRINCIPLES

New education legislation should have five principles on which the education system is built:

* inclusiveness not exclusiveness
* an education system committed to success
* a completely changed view of ability
* a life-long commitment to education and learning
* an education system based very firmly on competition

According to Professor Brighouse competition should be "competition against previous best". Success was for "everybody rather than depending on failure for many". The education system at every stage needed to be underpinned by principles of a "multi-faceted view of ability". He said working towards the five principles should be a priority for all, especially teachers.

IMMEDIATE STEPS

"We can have our visions, we can have our dreams, we can have our beliefs in what ought to be, but we are trapped in what is. I hope and pray that today we will, all of us, find ways of taking immediate and intermediate steps and deciding on longer term action".

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2] **MARK VAUGHAN**, Centre for Studies on Integration in Education [CSIE], expressed concern over the weak legal duty to integrate pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. This duty was not strengthened by the Education Reform Act, and some Local Education Authorities had increased segregation over the last few years. Integration was a human rights issue to which LEAs should show their commitment. The Reform Act need not militate against integration, provided LEAs got their funding right and the curriculum was broadened to include all children.

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THREAT TO INTEGRATION

Mark Vaughan said there was "a national concern and fear that well-supported integrated education is seriously threatened and in some areas being reversed by the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act. In some parts of the country, integration hangs in the balance as a result of the new law. Even before the Reform Act came into force, the national trend towards integration was slow."

The recent CSIE Factsheet, "Segregation Statistics" covering the eight years 1982-90, showed that 15 English Local Education Authorities became significantly more segregated over this period; three of them doing so by more than 25%.

"Where there is a serious LEA commitment to developing more integration, then the introduction of the Education Reform Act, in particular the National Curriculum and the Local Management of Schools, need not militate against a local process of including more and more children in the mainstream. Life might be difficult, but it isn't inevitable that the 1981 Education Act - with the integration duty - and the Reform Act will work against each other".

FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS

"In those areas where the interest and commitment in integration is low, it appears that crude, segregationist interpretations of the Reform Act, the regulations and government guidance are beginning to take hold. This is very worrying, and works against any notion of seeing integration as a fundamental, human rights issue, which is what a growing number of people now feel it is. Those battling with the demands of the Reform Act need to keep on going in their progress towards integration".

A FORCE FOR THE GOOD

"There are conflicting messages about the Local Management of schools and integration, but one good message does seem to be that if you get the right kind of weighting in the LEA formula for delegating funds to schools, then powerful incentives will be in place for local mainstream schools to see pupils with special needs as their responsibility".

"Tony Dessent, Principal Educational Psychologist for Nottinghamshire, described the effect of the National Curriculum on children with disabilities or learning difficulties as a 'force for the good'. His point was that there will now have to be a real broadening of the curriculum for pupils in special schools. In many cases, special school pupils will simply have to go to ordinary schools in order to receive the curriculum that is now their entitlement. In a growing number of areas, special and ordinary school staff are linking up together to work out a joint response to the National Curriculum".

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3] HILARY ARMSTRONG, MP, Labour Party spokeswoman on special education, described integration as a human rights issue and said Labour will be considering how to make the "major change" of ensuring that in the future, LEAs would have to justify segregation. Labour was already committed to extending equal opportunities legislation to cover disability. Under Labour education proposals, segregation would be rare and integration the norm, to the benefit of the whole community. The need to seek statements to ensure access to resources would be replaced by effective funding and independent advice, reducing statementing to a last resort. Ms Armstrong suggested that the basis for statements should be "what was necessary to enable a child to be integrated into the mainstream".

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INTEGRATION TO BE THE NORM

In August 1991 Labour's proposals for a policy on special education were published for consultation. Hilary Armstrong told the conference that integration was a prime issue for many voluntary organisations and individuals and had a central place in Labour's policy proposals.

"Special education can no longer be tacked onto the end of education policies as though the children, their parents and schools were somehow of secondary importance. Special education can no longer remain segregated from the mainstream of the education service".

"Whilst this is allowed to continue, the integration of children with special educational needs will not increase as we would all wish. I hope that we will move to the situation where integration is seen as the norm and where integration of policies - and of action - for children with learning difficulties of whatever sort, will be tackled within the development of policies for education".

Hilary Armstrong said while it was important to make the arguments for integration, everyone must also now address the specific ways to make integration the reality. "I believe that integration is fundamental to realising the goals and putting our values into practice. Integration doesn't just bring children together; it involves de-segregating the education service. Integration must not just be seen in terms of placement; integration is a human rights issue and in the preparation of equal opportunity legislation, the Labour Party has a commitment to extend this to people with disabilities".

"Integration is about the right of children to be viewed and treated equally, the right to be educated in their local school with their friends or their peers, the right of access to the curriculum, the right to have their educational and environmental needs met, and the right to achieve their potential".

"The sooner that we have the situation where the segregation of some children is rare, the sooner we will reap the benefits of integration in our local communities and the sooner the discrimination against people with disabilities will be tackled as the problem it is - and diminish".

While there had been "remarkable moves forward in integration" it was also true that in some authorities the situation had actually got worse. The Education Standards Commission proposed by the Labour Party will "use integration as part of the target for the school; it will also monitor and work with the LEA on how their special needs policy is enabling integration and educational entitlement. We have to make sure that we do not segregate the special needs experts and that everyone who is working with children has got confidence in how they need to be looking at the special needs area".

LOCAL MANAGEMENT

Under Local Management of Schools there was a danger that LEAs holding money centrally could encourage segregation. To tackle this LEAs should provide an enhanced rate for children with learning difficulties or disabilities to make sure that schools were encouraged at a local level to facilitate integration. The pupil-age weighted formula had given some problems. An authority had to make sure that there was within that formula an enhanced rate for children with learning difficulties, not just children with statements.

Hilary Armstrong acknowledged that statementing process was problematic for parents, teachers, LEAs and the children themselves. These problems could be overcome by strategies such as independent advice for parents, good liaison and participation between the parents and the school and the provision of resources to meet children's educational requirements.

A survey of authorities, conducted by Ms Armstrong found that statementing was now taking longer and that "because of the formula for LMS people are being pushed into statementing more children, because that is the way you get money. In other areas they are trying not to statement because they know they do not have the resources to attach to the statement".

WHOLE-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

"Our mainstream policy here is to develop whole-school partnerships where every child and every parent will, through the record of a achievement and a regular meeting at the school, discuss their progress to date and what has to happen next year. There will be parental input and responsibility for the school".

"We will be saying to the authorities: 'Work with your schools to work out how in that school, in that locality, you can most effectively make contact with parents'. In the long term I believe this approach, if we get the funding right, will make a statement simply a back-up for those parents who haven't got the confidence or their relationship with the school has broken down".

"In these circumstances there is lack of confidence from the parents who think that their child will not get the education they need if they haven't got a statement. Many people now feel that a statement is the only way they can get access to any resources. That ought not to be the case. Many authorities feel they are using up too many of their valuable resources in producing the statement rather than providing the support. At the end of the day it is the support, properly identified, that is the most important thing".

A further development in Labour's approach to statementing was outlined by Ms. Armstrong in answer to questions after her talk. She said Labour would be looking into how it could make sure that the basis of a statement was what would be necessary to enable a child to be integrated into the mainstream. She said this amounted to "authorities having to justify segregation" and referred to it as a major change.

Closing her talk Hilary Armstrong said that reforming educational structures and practices was not easy and there would be many obstacles. However, it had to be a priority so that "children with special needs are at the centre of our education policy. Their needs have got to be addressed in a way that recognises them firstly, as ordinary, everyday members of their family and community".

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4] **CHRISTINE GILBERT**, Deputy Education Officer, Harrow LEA, spoke about LMS and integration and highlighted the opportunities provided by the Education Reform Act for a participatory approach to planning and decision making at local levels. School Governing Bodies and Headteachers now had more power which should lead to more explicitly shared plans for schools' development and resource management, articulating a commitment to integration and comprehensive education.

On resources, she said she had become less nervous of the requirement on LEAs to delegate 85 per cent of their potential schools budget. Funds held in "large central pots" were extremely vulnerable to cuts in a way that funds delegated to schools were not. As for fears that schools could mis-use money allocated for statemented special needs provision, she suggested that protection was provided by the legal duties regarding special educational provision on LEAs and governors and other monitoring responsibilities.

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LOCAL MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOLS

The Education Reform Act has made a dramatic impact on the education system. There had been a shift in power limiting the functions of local education authorities and a strengthening of the role of central Government. At the same time considerable powers and responsibilities had been given to Governing Bodies and Headteachers. The Government's idea behind the Act was that the quality of education would improve through competition between schools. Parents were apparently offered a greater choice of schools and schools were rewarded through formula funding.

"Formula funding, the cornerstone of the new arrangements for resource distribution to schools, represents a way of rewarding schools which have attracted consumers. This wider context for the Local Management of Schools makes clear the Government's intention of creating a more competitive environment for schools by putting them very firmly in the market place. The belief is that if a school produces what consumers want, they will send their children there and funding will increase accordingly".

However, the assumption behind the Act was based on a belief that "the relationship between the school and test results is un-problematic. It takes no notice of external factors such as the socio-economic and fails to address what happens when a popular school is full".

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A COMMITMENT TO INTEGRATION

Christine Gilbert pointed out that one of the dangers of a competitive approach was that co-operation would be lost and the most vulnerable would suffer. She went on to stress the importance of a commitment to integration by LEAs and governing bodies.

"All children within a community have equal rights to the opportunities offered by education. These rights are not changed or reduced by the Local Management of Schools, or the legislation. These rights are what integration is about. The most helpful definition of integration I have come across is from Tony Booth, of the Open University, back in the early 1980s when he described integration as a process of increasing the participation of children and young people in their communities".

"The commitment to integration is a commitment to comprehensive education. The role of the LEA in this is crucial. It sees beyond the individual school to ensure that the education service does indeed respond to the needs of all learners in the community and that provision is rooted in quality and fairness".

"Legislation gives the governing body responsibility for establishing the values and ethos of its school and how best to meet the needs of its pupils. The policy stemming from this must inform all aspects of the school's work. The significance of the governors' commitment to integration is therefore clear".

"A commitment to the values, to the principle of integration still remains the first plank to establishing effective mainstream provision. If we are really to manage LMS, rather than let it manage us, it remains important for schools to articulate their commitment to integration, to comprehensive education and to devise plans which help them reach this goal".

WHOLE-SCHOOL PLANNING

According to Christine Gilbert whole-school planning was the most valuable and constructive way of approaching the Local Management of Schools.

She said that under the Reform Act there was now the opportunity of "running schools more democratically so that greater delegation entails greater participation in decision making. This should lead to more explicitly shared plans for school development and for the local management of school resources".

"This issue of exactly who should be involved in decision making, should be an area of keener debate not just for governors and teachers, but also for other school staff, the parents and maybe even the pupils! An agreed school development plan with a clear focus on the needs of all children and on the curriculum is the most valuable and constructive way of approaching the Local Management of Schools, and indeed of approaching integration".

"This approach has the potential for improving the quality of education by more effective management of the school. Educational priorities become the base of all resource decision. Effective decision-making at school level is fundamental to shaping the changes introduced by ERA rather than being shaped by them".

In Harrow LEA a Governors' Forum had been recently established as a council committee, enabling elected members to engage with representative governors on debate about service policy, planning and resourcing.

A CASE STUDY: HARROW LEA

Christine Gilbert outlined what was happening in Harrow LEA in terms of the Local Management of Schools and integration. In 1986 Harrow produced a policy paper on "special needs" in called the "learning support policy". The policy was rooted in the belief that children with "special educational needs" should have equal rights to the opportunities offered by a comprehensive system of education. Funds were released to support schools in implementing the policy and additional staff provided to facilitate integration.

The schools in Harrow are grouped in geographical areas to form cluster groups. The headteachers of these cluster schools meet regularly to develop curriculum initiatives and to organise common in-service training for teachers. Within each cluster area, one or more primary schools is given additional staffing resources. These schools have become known as ARMS schools - Additionally Resourced Mainstream Schools. The primary sector has a language and learning support service and there is a high school support service for pupils who have a 1981 Act Statement. The funds for ancillary assistants go directly to schools and some schools have been adapted and resourced for pupils with physical or sensory disabilities.

"Currently, Harrow funds all this provision through its centrally held special needs budget. This is general practice for pupils with statements in mainstream but there are exceptions. Switching resources for statemented students from central to delegated expenditure helps LEAs meet the new LMS requirements set out in Circular 7/91".

"This Circular makes two important changes in the rules governing the Local Management of Schools for Harrow. First there is a requirement on LEAs to delegate by 1993 at least 85% of their Potential Schools Budget. This is the money that an LEA can potentially delegate to schools. For the majority of LEAs this will entail reducing the funds and services they hold centrally and delegating monies to schools. Schools would have larger budgets, but would have to buy in all they needed for their special needs provision - teachers, welfare assistants or advice and support from agencies of private companies".

DELEGATING FUNDS

" While this might not have been a line we'd have chosen to pursue as an LEA, I am less and less nervous of it. My impression is that funds held in what look like large central pots are extremely vulnerable to cutting in a way that funds delegated to schools are not. There seems to be increasing political sensitivity to cutting school budgets and this is likely to be heightened given the increasing confidence of governing bodies and their ability to act as pressure groups for resources".

"There are some fears that delegation might mean that schools could use the money allocated for statemented provision for other purposes. This has to relate back to my earlier points about the importance of whole school commitment to the principle of integration and the planning and resourcing decisions which should stem from that. Furthermore both the governing body and the LEA have statutory duties regarding special educational needs and also monitoring and evaluation responsibilities more generally".

"Circular 7/91 allows an additional weighting for statemented pupils into the age weighted element of the formula, and this is welcomed. Currently, Harrow is calculating the cost of funding additionally resourced schools and translating that to formula weightings. So a school resourced with three additional teachers and five welfare assistants to take 30 statemented students each year, can be translated into a per pupil cost. Additionally resourced primary schools have at least one extra teacher and welfare assistant for every twelve pupils and this can be translated into weightings.

"There is still a need to retain a safety net or a contingency fund for requirements over and above this provision, but this special needs pot would be minuscule compared with the money currently held centrally for funding ARMS schools".

Christine Gilbert said the key point was that Harrow LEA already had a policy for integration and strategies for achieving it which involved devolving resources. It was therefore able to use the DES regulations to continue doing what they consider appropriate and right to maintain their commitment to integration.

For non-statemented pupils Harrow will implement a system of allocating funding by using moderators to ensure school judgements of the numbers of children requiring additional resources are fair. Headteachers and Special Needs co-ordinators will identify pupils whose needs require special provision such as additional equipment and resources, specialist teaching techniques, non-teaching support, adaptations to the buildings, a modified curriculum and regular counselling for emotional difficulties.

Christine Gilbert finished her detailed account of Harrow's approach to the Local Management of Schools by stressing the importance of maintaining a commitment to integration. "We should not allow ourselves to be distracted. We must continue to express a commitment to the values and principle of integration and devise shared policies and action plans to bring about change".

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5] **SUSAN HART**, CAMBRIDGE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION, said there were dangers in approaching the National Curriculum by differentiating it for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Emphasising general curriculum development was a better way forward.

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A CURRICULUM DILEMMA

According to Susan Hart, the notion of entitlement to a common curriculum in the 1988 Act posed a dilemma for teachers who were committed to developing fully comprehensive and inclusive education for all children.

"On the one hand the achievement of statutory entitlement to a common curriculum for all could be seen as an important step forward towards achieving fully integrated provision for all children.

"On the other hand, it also introduces a new rigidity and standardisation into the educational process which may make it harder for schools to respond flexibly to the needs of all children".

DIFFERENTIATION

Susan Hart said the emerging consensus in the Special Needs field was that "differentiation" was the key to implementing the National Curriculum, that is, supporting teachers in developing their skills in planning and adapting classroom learning experiences to accommodate individual needs and differences.

However, she was suggesting an alternative which emphasised general curriculum development and which seemed more supportive of integration.

"There is an alternative interpretation arising from the experience of the past decade which appears to have been overlooked, and it can offer the most powerful argument in support of integration. This puts the emphasis on general curriculum development work, that is, using the opportunities provided by the new statutory curicula framework to enhance learning opportunities for all children in ways which are especially beneficial for children with 'special educational needs'".

THE RISKS

Differentiation should not be considered to be the main way forward because of the risks, the missed opportunities and the principle itself.

"The main risk is that if we are emphasising individual teachers responsibilities to provide for the individual needs of children with learning difficulties, they may think that we want an individually designed curriculum for each child. That may be too daunting in its prospect, even for the most dedicated and excellent teachers. They should not feel the best way to arrange the curriculum is to sort and separate it in order to be able to provide programmes of study".

"The differentiated levels of the National Curriculum have provided an imperative to divide children up according to their levels of attainment. If children's differences are identified in this way, the danger is that this will be used to say that children cannot participate within this curriculum that is potentially a 'shared curriculum'. The child should not be made to feel that they have an individual lonely path through the National Curriculum".

COMMON CURRICULUM

The important principle for Susan Hart was that opportunities were derived from the National Curriculum to take forward thinking and practice in developing integration. The possibilities for this lay in the curriculum being a common curriculum and that the learning of all pupils could be enhanced from this experience. It involved the fostering of good practice such as co-operative learning approaches, open-ended tasks, and individual and small group teaching.

"Curriculum redesign has been going on for a long time and children with special educational needs will provide that impetus in their schools. My experience in mainstream schools has been that the difficulties experienced by children in the process of curriculum redesign is that things were made easier for the children if there was more emphasis in the curriculum on drama, presentation, drawing, construction work or collage".

"The children were not always required to respond to learning through the written word. It helped them to have the opportunity to lead the discussion, rather than the teacher. For them to learn to report, to learn through co-operation, to have the opportunity for them to initiate their own learning, to be engaged in open-ended tasks and to bring their knowledge to the learning situation. More emphasis is required on individual and small group teaching and opportunities for pupils to work together to value their own work".

"The traditional biases of the National Curriculum make it more difficult for children with special educational needs to learn. We need to shift the emphasis from the traditional emphasis of the curriculum to the shared curriculum. The opportunities brought by this will result in enhanced learning opportunities for all children".

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6] **RICHARD RIESER**, a disabled teacher, identified the need for educationalists to listen to the Disability Movement as a crucial factor in making progress towards an inclusive education system. He said disabled children and children with learning difficulties were entitled to the same schooling experience as other children. Disability equality was part of human rights. As an interim measure, an increase in statementing was necessary in order to ensure that pupils were entitled to integration and appropriate support in mainstream schools.

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LISTENING TO DISABLED PEOPLE

Richard Rieser said the rights of disabled people were still not recognised. "Even now there are perhaps a dozen LEAs who are really seriously taking on disability as an equal opportunities issue in their equal opportunities statements. That of course creates a very poor position when it comes to the governors taking over those statements and really becoming the LEA's main agents of information on equality".

What was required in education was the elevation of disability equality through a dialogue with the Disability Movement. Because disabled people were an oppressed group they had not been listened to, yet this could be a way of unravelling the challenges to integration that the Reform Act provided.

"Dialogue has not taken place between the disability movement and educationalists and I believe it is what we need now to get us through this very tricky problem of the National Curriculum, Local Management of Schools and the Local Management of Special Schools".

He told the conference how the Disability Movement wanted to change the way disabled people are viewed and treated.

STEREOTYPES AND PITY

"The disadvantages we experience are very largely based upon the way that we are treated. People view us with a range of stereotypes, with pity, ignorance, as figures of mirth. Mostly they do not see us at all, and if they do, then they see our condition and not us as people.

"People see us in our medical condition - our loss of function and impairment. Society, work, school, shops, entertainments, universities, colleges, transport, leisure, houses, country parks, are structured to exclude us in one

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way or another. This discrimination reinforces attitudes towards us as disabled people and people with learning difficulties".

"These attitudes are deep-rooted in myth, religion and literature, but unfortunately are reinforced throughout the curriculum by the use of language, by television, newspapers, films, media and popular news".

"Society's main response to our disability is to be frightened, piteous and therefore to resort to some way of overcoming that by charity, by feeling that something has to be done, by everybody being 'helped'. The most important thing that disabled people want is to be listened to".

"The Disability Movement is a liberation struggle. We need to hear more from disabled people about their oppression. There are many coalition groups around the country run by disabled people and it is important for LEAs struggling with the current predicament in education, to make contact with these groups".

"The British Council of Disabled Peoples Organisations and the affiliated Integration Alliance, who speaks for them on education, is a national organisation with contacts throughout the country. They are committed to integration and the end of segregation. This is what the Disability Movement is saying and we expect LEAs to move forward on that even though it is difficult".

A SENSE OF IDENTITY

Richard Rieser said ending segregation in itself was not the be all and end all. Children needed to have a sense of their own identity. Different experiences should be valued and oppression recognised.

"Just getting children with learning difficulties and disabled children into the same institution doesn't necessarily mean that there is equality. In a sense it's true that children are all the same and one wants to encourage that but also we have to give children a sense of their own identity.

"Part of growing up and sharing experiences is that children with different backgrounds share those experiences. What's missing in our schools is a culture of the Disability Movement. This culture can provide a positive view of the disability experience. It is not something to be pitied, but something that you've got and you get on with it and live with it. People do not 'overcome' disability in any way but just get on and live with it".

"Certain experiences are valuable experiences which other people do not get, and they can inform everybody's experience. That needs to be valued, rather than saying 'they are all the same'".

Disability Equality Training as a way of challenging stereotypes and prejudices was central to a change in attitudes. "We have to facilitate a way that this can take place for teachers, parents, and school governors. We intend to form a regional network that will be available to train staff and then work alongside them in schools".

THE INCLUSIVE SCHOOL

Richard Rieser said an inclusive school should "provide an inclusive environment where each person, each child gets what they need to grow and develop".

He said the National Curriculum was no obstacle to putting the experiences of disabled children into the curriculum and at the same time teaching it to all children. The problem was testing and how we reacted to testing.

"The whole-school policy is the key to an inclusive school and should include a written commitment to approaching disability as an equal opportunities issue in relation to the following:

- Access to the environment.
- Access to the curriculum.
- Including disability issues within the curriculum.
- Assessments and statements of special needs.
- Disapplication and modification of the National Curriculum.
- Support staff.
- Co-ordination of peripatetic services e.g., speech and physiotherapy.
- Communication.
- British Sign Language as a 'mother tongue'.
- Language.
- Images and literature.
- Abuse - name calling and harassment.
- Transport.
- Trips.
- Medication and nursing assistance.
- Liaison.
- Obtaining and maintaining "special" equipment.
- Consultation with parents.
- Self-representation of disabled pupils.
- Employment and support for disabled teachers and other staff.
- Disabled parents.
- Physical education and physical disability.
- Sports and 'able-ism.'

Clubs and extra-curricular activities and services like play-centres.
Medical emergencies.
Health and Safety.
Involvement of Trade Unions and staff representatives.
Representation of disability and learning difficulties on governing bodies.
INSET for teachers, support staff and governors by disabled trainers.

MORE STATEMENTING

Richard Rieser called for an increase in statementing to ensure integration with appropriate support under the Local Management of Schools.

"Under formula funding the unsuccessful schools will loose out. In this situation it's not surprising the Government tells us they are not in favour of increasing statementing. I believe very strongly - as an interim measure towards more inclusive schools - we have to insist on children's rights to statementing".

"The 1989 Children Act gives the legal aid that is required for parents to fight for the statement. This is now vested in the income of the child and not the parent. That means that every single child should be advised by teachers, educationalists and LEAs through independent advice centres to force the LEAs to initiate the statement, so that the resources the child needs are guaranteed".

"For children to be entitled to integration and to get the support that they need there has to be an increase in statementing. There should be a national minimum standard which should be underwritten by central Government. Countries that have been more successful than us in integration have had central Government funding tied to access to mainstream education. The biggest problem with the 1981 Education Act is that there was no money put into LEAs to make it work, now with even tighter budgetary control it's very difficult".

HUMAN RIGHTS

"How do we get through all this? By hanging on to the principle of disability equality as a part of human rights. There is an entitlement to disabled children and children with learning difficulties to have the same schooling experience as all other children. This is a human rights issue for generations of children to come".

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MAIN POINTS DURING SPEAKERS' QUESTION TIMES, THE WORKING GROUPS AND PLENARY SESSION.

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JUSTIFYING SEGREGATION
While cautious optimism about integration was expressed by some delegates, in spite of ERA, others insisted that real progress would not be made until segregation was challenged and inclusive education was every child's right.

They called for a clear statement "against segregation" and suggested it was important to recognise why segregated education had been established in the first place. The proposal from Hilary Armstrong MP relating to mainstream-led statements and education authorities having to justify segregation, was warmly welcomed by Professor Brighouse. He said such developments would have a profound effect, leading to a "sea-change" in attitudes.

SEGREGATION TRAGEDIES
A strong plea was made for delegates to remember the children who were still being segregated and to question why these "tragedies" were happening, even as education authorities spoke in support of integration. Until segregationist attitudes and prejudices were "really challenged", pro-integration rhetoric was rendered "meaningless".

PARENTS' REQUEST
A spokeswoman said that parents of children with disabilities or difficulties in learning had a simple request on which they hoped all plans for services for their children would be based. The request was that when parents approached their ordinary, local services on behalf of their children they wanted their children to be "welcomed and included and for their needs to be met".

LEAP IN UNDERSTANDING
A former special school user said the "missing link" in the integration discussion was the contribution of the consumers of special education. She thought that the "leap in understanding" which was needed for progress would not happen until disabled people who had been through special education were consulted.

COMMUNITY CARE
A discrepancy between adult services for people with disabilities or learning difficulties and education services was highlighted. One delegate suggested it was unreasonable to adopt community care polices based on participation for

disabled people in ordinary living, while in the education service a separate role was still recommended for disabled children.

CHILDREN WITH BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS

It was suggested that emotional problems and behavioural difficulties were as much a special need as any other disability or difficulty. The goal should be to provide expert help for these children in ordinary schools. They might have to be withdrawn at times within the school but they were part of the ordinary class and the aim should be to re-integrate them into the class.

TEACHER TRAINING

Improvements in teacher training were seen as important if teachers were to be enabled to include all children and "enjoy integration", rather than rejecting those with special needs. Suggested improvements included more disability equality training as well as help to enable teachers to learn good habits regarding everyday classroom practice which created an atmosphere of inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness.

FINANCE

The lack of "political will or a culture" which perceives the need to provide appropriate resources to fund an inclusive education service was highlighted as a burning issue. It was also suggested that a problem with funding under LMS was that it was not "needs-led". However, delegates were warned not to regard the period before LMS funding as a "golden age" because that had the effect of diverting attention from focusing on the real problems of integration, including school management and teaching and learning strategies, which had existed for years. Although the need for a big increase in resources for schools was appreciated, how the resources were used, rather than actual quantity available, was identified as the crucial consideration.

POLICY DIRECTION

There was a call at the conference for a clear policy direction and leadership from central Government on integration. LEAs and Governors needed to be informed when they made decisions about special educational provision. It was felt that consciousness-raising in the Department of Education and Science was required before the necessary "shift" at the top took place and Government realised that schools were better places for all once the segregation option, or the "eject button", had been removed.

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